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THEOSOPHY

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INTRODUCTION

to a series of twelve radio talks.

When people hear the word Theosophy, about which I am going to speak to you today, the term may sound very strange to them as they may think it cannot possibly be a subject of any practical interest or value. But actually Theosophy is one of the most interesting and practical subjects in the world, for it tells you what the world is all about, why we are here, the goal we are working towards, and — especially — how we may make our lives more efficient, successful and happy. It gives understanding of the so-called mysteries of life — why so many seem to suffer so undeservedly, why so many who seem to deserve nothing have everything. It takes the terror out of death and, although Theosophy is not Spiritualistic, it furnishes vast information about the life after death. But its most valuable function in the first instance is to make life better, easier, and more understandable while it is being lived now.

A great many people have felt intuitively — some of them since childhood or youth — that there must be some explanation which adds up and makes sense for the countless things that happen to them and to others which don't seem to add up and make sense. Often they go from one lecture hall to another hoping they may find it. They search the libraries for books that will enlighten them. They join this or that movement which seems to offer promise of what they are seeking. And not seldom they end up about where they started, perhaps with some gains in the way of added knowledge, but still far from the comprehensive, all-embracing answer to their quest they had so ardently hoped to find.

We who are Theosophists are deeply sympathetic to those who are thus seeking, because they are duplicating our own experience. And because we have found understanding, and with it happiness and peace of mind, we feel impelled to offer this knowledge to anyone we can contact who feels the need of it. We do not aim to unsettle the minds of those who are perfectly satisfied with their own philosophy, whatever it may be. Our message — the message of Theosophy — is to those who are not satisfied and whose lives are, in consequence, one long question mark.

No one who has not had the experience can imagine what a

change comes over the thinking and the acting and, indeed, the entire life, when once it is realized that we are not here by chance but that a plan, a purpose, and a glorious future right here on earth as well as elsewhere exists for all of us -- and is certain. When theosophical knowledge is heard and understood, everything slips into its rightful place. All the seeming contradictions, paradoxes and inconsistencies of life are seen for what they are -- part of a great and beneficent pattern for our education, wellbeing and ultimate perfection.

All this may amaze anyone who is hearing for the first time that such information exists. But it is not new information. In the early days of Christianity it was taught by an important sect called the Gnostic. It was the teaching of the Essenes, of whose number Jesus is traditionally said to be one. It is found in the Bible in veiled and parable form so that one needs to know something about symbology to understand it; and it will be remembered that Jesus told his disciples that while it was given to them to know the truth, the multitude could only be taught in parables. So Theosophy is quite in line with the truest Christian teaching -- that of the Christ Himself -- and because of that, The Theosophical Society numbers thousands of Christian churchgoers in its ranks as well as thousands of non-Christians such as Hindus, Buddhists, and so forth, in the East, and some people who follow no particular religion at all.

Theosophy is not a religion but a body of knowledge handed down from generation to generation since earliest times, and it has formed the secret or esoteric side of all the great religions.

Most people at some time or other have speculated on the reason God had for producing us at all. Theosophy has a great deal to say about that. And its teaching is all logical and appealing to common sense. It answers in convincing fashion all the questions I cited earlier in this talk. It demands no beliefs on authority -- only on the reasonableness of the facts advanced. And it promises you, if you think them through and find them worthy of your acceptance, an understanding of life and its purpose, of death and its purpose, of the pleasant and the unpleasant and their purposes, of prosperity and privation and their purposes, and so on all the way through the many manifestations that go to

make up a person's days, both here and hereafter.

The story of Theosophy is literally the oldest in the world. It goes back to the very dawn of Creation. It tells of all the things about which man has speculated since first he started to think: why he is here, what happens to him when he leaves here, how long he is likely to stay away, and why he comes back and keeps on coming back until he has experienced everything, learned and acquired all the powers that earth life can give him.

It tells, too, of man's inner composition, his invisible makeup which is much more real and important than the part of him that can be seen. It explains how such things as these can be investigated by the few who have developed the super-physical sight that can respond to vibrations of material and of phenomena invisible to ordinary sight. It describes worlds existing within and outside of our own, inhabited by a vast population of their own and also by great numbers of those who died on earth and live for many years, even centuries, in these worlds before returning for more experience to this one.

It speaks not from theory or speculation or imagination, but from knowledge -- from knowledge embodied in ancient books and scriptures. It is very old knowledge, the oldest there is -- in fact, it is called the Ancient Wisdom. But until recent times it was considered too sacred to communicate to the masses of the people. It was felt that they would not comprehend it and would merely become angry because it destroyed some of their cherished prejudices.

Jesus explained to his disciples why the multitudes, meaning the listening people, could be taught only in parables in the significant words, "That seeing they may not see, and hearing they may not understand." He also admonished them, "Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine." And he furnished the reason in the words "Lest they trample them under foot and turn again and rend you."

These are words of wisdom and no one better appreciates them than the Theosophist. He knows full well that this all-embracing knowledge was so highly prized in the days of antiquity that the highest ambition of the intellectuals of Greece

Rome and other lands was to obtain admission to the Greater and Lesser Mysteries where it was taught and exemplified. He knows, too, that later ignorance and superstition almost eradicated this greatest of all Truth from the minds of men in occidental lands. Almost, but not quite. There have always been a rare few to keep its torch alight; and in the East it has never flickered.

But it remained for The Theosophical Society, over seventy five years ago, to restore the Ancient Wisdom to the West, and in modern scientific and intelligible language in which never before had it been presented either in the East or in the West. In offering it to you in this series of broadcasts it will be simplified still further so that those hearing it for the first time may readily grasp its implications and submit it to the test of logic and probability.

It is a magnificent system, a stupendous system, as indeed it could not fail to be for it is the system devised not by man but by God. We think you will be thrilled to hear about it.

If this sounds interesting to you, we suggest that you listen next week for the first theosophical subject with which we will deal -- Reincarnation, or re-birth many times into physical human bodies so that we may learn lessons, gain experience and eventually become perfect. It is a fascinating subject. It is sensible and makes no demands on credulity. It explains hundreds of so-called mysteries that otherwise are completely unexplainable. It will open before you a new, enlarged, and stately vista of life.

REINCARNATION

Last week I told you I would have something to say about one of the important pieces of ancient knowledge which Theosophy affords — the fact that human beings are born not just once here on earth, but many times. This is called "Reincarnation", but we need not use a long word to describe a simple thing that has happened to all of us over and over again, and is bound to happen repeatedly in the future.

Let me at once assure you that this does not mean being re-born as an animal — a ridiculous notion which is fantastic and impossible. It would be no more conceivable that one should die a human and reincarnate as an animal, than that one should go to sleep at night as a human being and wake up tomorrow an animal. Once a human, always a human — until we become something greater than human; and that is the objective of these many lives on earth that each of us has held and will hold until we have completed our human evolution.

Now I fully recognize that this idea of more than one life here may sound outlandish to one hearing it for the first time, and may perhaps be quite difficult to examine impartially or without prejudging. That is perfectly natural and the way the human mind often works upon hearing an entirely new truth. People reacted in that way when first they were told that the earth was not flat but a sphere, that it moved around the sun instead of vice-versa, that it was not the center of the universe but quite an insignificant little speck, physically speaking. They were shocked, incredulous and, in some cases, very angry.

Now Theosophists certainly do not wish to shock or offend any one and as Theosophy is not a religion we do not wish to convert anyone. We do not even want to change anyone to our way of thinking. That is strictly up to the listener. We are quite sure that no one is ever punished or rewarded for his beliefs or non-beliefs, except only as these beliefs themselves may punish or reward him by making him miserable and apprehensive, or happy and assured.

When this concept of rebirth is thoroughly understood, it clears up all — and we can say "all" without exaggeration — the apparently incomprehensible things that happen to people throughout life. The details may be hidden from us, but

the principle behind these occurrences becomes clear as crystal. For the first time, perhaps, we start to understand what life is trying to do - not to us but for us. And to many who have sought for years for just this knowledge it may come as a great and wonderful illumination, making the business of living -- and of dying too -- a gloriously purposeful experience, full of significance and meaning.

But we realize that some who hear of this truth may not react to it in that way, that, to them, it may seem upsetting to cherished beliefs or in conflict with religious convictions. Actually it is one of the oldest of Christian teachings, appears a number of times in the Bible, and was taught in early Christianity.

To those in whom the information I am giving strikes a responsive chord, seems appealing, logical, probable, worth knowing more about, I now address myself.

Can you see how hundreds of lives on earth would enable the score to be evened up so that the few would not have all the advantages, the many the disadvantages, but all would be enabled to obtain equal opportunities?

Do you see how leaders are developed from among those who have had more lives, more experiences, more training than others who still are followers but who will one day become leaders? Not all souls are of equal age, you see. Some started their series of lives far ahead of others. Some are still young souls, so to speak, with many lives yet needed to bring them to even the average level.

Is it not clear that this explains the criminal and the moron as also it explains the genius and the brilliant? And does it not also account for the incurably afflicted, the sightless the maimed, the dwarfed, the disfigured? What kind of a "break" did they get, when others are straight, strong, and healthy? But suppose these are learning needed lessons by their suffering. Does not the Bible say "There is no respect of persons with God"? And suppose that these individuals had shown, by wrongful actions in previous lives, that these painful lessons were needed for their right development. Would not that vindicate the justice of God and demonstrate that in the moral realm as in the physical there is nothing purposeless?

But you may say, "What use is all this when we don't remember, don't know what we are suffering for?" Theosophy replies, "Your soul remembers." Just as the subconscious mind stores up every memory of the present life, just so does the superconscious mind, the soul or, as Theosophy calls it, the Ego, remembers and understands why each thing happens. And after physical death, before we come back to earth again we in our conscious minds shall also remember and understand. For we do not come back right away. Most people have many centuries of happiness before they return to earth life for more experience.

As these talks progress, I shall have a great deal more to tell you regarding the process of rebirth and its reasons. So if you are interested and feel that the knowledge holds something for you, listen to the next of these talks when I shall go further into this great teaching about our many lives and tell you also of the twin teaching of "inevitable consequence", cause and effect, or, as they call it in eastern lands, "karma". The teaching of karma rounds out the concept of rebirth and makes it even more logical and understandable. Without it, rebirth would have no purpose.

Have you not often asked yourself, "Why did this thing happen to me? What could be the purpose of God, or Fate, or Destiny in choosing to give me so much trouble?" Or perhaps your question may be the reverse: "Have I really done enough to deserve the happiness and the good things that have come to me?"

If you have not been able to answer your own question except by saying, "Just one of those things", which of course does not answer it at all, Theosophy can answer it for you.

For the theosophical knowledge regarding the workings of rebirth and inevitable consequence, the latter often carrying over from one life to the next or even later, furnishes a perfect, a logical, and a satisfying answer. With this answer you no longer live life blindly but understandingly, no longer stumble through difficulties without the least idea of why they occur, but with clear vision of what they are meant to accomplish for you. And you will no longer resent them. No student of Theosophy resents such things for he knows they are sent not to harass but to help him, not to punish but to educate him, not because of something he has

done or left undone, but because of some quality which he lacks and which the hard road he is temporarily treading will help him to acquire.

None except those who have experienced it can know the enormous sense of relief, of added power, of enlightenment in the ways of God and man that this knowledge, once understood, can bring. It will be my privilege to put it before you in the next talk.

KARMA

Now I am going to tell you more about the reasons for the many times we are born on this planet. I have already pointed out the marvellous way in which these numerous rebirths enable the score to be evened up and everyone eventually to obtain just as many opportunities, just as much of the good things of life, as everyone else. It is quite certain that one life alone does not allow this, and even those most strongly opposed to the rebirth idea would never claim that it does. But it is equally certain that a great many lives, if there were enough of them, would assuredly permit of this very just distribution of nature's favors.

There is a great deal more, however, to this "reincarnation" as it is called, than an insurance of equal justice on earth for all, though that is important enough. Still more important is the experience, and through experience the education, which all these lives enable us to get. Think how restricted are the opportunities of ninety percent or more of the world's population. In this blessed land of America our people have more chances of improving their lot and maintaining high standards of living than in any country on the globe. Yet even here millions are born and die who struggle all through life for no more than a tiny place in the sun -- and never find it. They have nothing, or next to nothing. And a few, a very few, have everything. No use dismissing this stark reality with the easy remark, "Just one of those things". God is good, and if, as Jesus declared, not even a sparrow falls to the ground without His knowledge, He would not countenance "just one of those things" unless there existed a very real reason why "those things" are beneficent and right, and for the helping of the very ones against whom they seem to discriminate.

Those of us to whom this life has been kind, who have had the advantages of education, travel, culture, and the creature comforts money can buy, have known our share, our full share of lives of privation, distress, and lack of even the bare necessities. And if we misuse the good things destiny has showered upon us this time -- if with them we are heartless or selfish or callous to others less favored -- we may know those lives of hardship again, even though that part of our education was supposed to be over and done with. It was, or should have been, a valuable course in the curriculum.

It was intended to develop in us a masterful will to overcome the hard conditions by which we were faced. Theosophy does not teach meek resignation to difficult circumstances. The purpose of difficult circumstances is to make us do something about them if we possibly can -- and we usually can if we act intelligently. That way we grow spiritually. We acquire qualities we did not have. We are reborn with those additional qualities and, if we have learned that particular lesson thoroughly, we don't have to go through the unpleasantness again. Our behavior in the new life shows whether we have learned the lesson or not.

Now all this is not some strange new doctrine invented by someone. It is one of the oldest of beliefs. The people around Jesus, his own disciples, took it for granted; and Jesus himself taught it both by implication and in clear words. I will give you the Biblical references and you can verify them by looking them up if you wish.

First I will show you beyond question that the disciples believed in more than one earth life for an individual, and that Jesus did not rebuke them for such belief but made a reply which plainly indicated that it was a true belief, which he shared.

Here is the passage: John, Chapter IX, verses 1 to 3. "And as Jesus passed by, he saw a man which was blind from his birth. And his disciples asked him, saying, 'Master, who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind?' Jesus answered, 'Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents: but that the works of God should be made manifest in him'."

Isn't it perfectly evident from this question, "Did this man sin...?" that the disciples regarded the blindness from birth as a punishment? But when could the man have sinned if he was born blind -- mark that: born blind -- except in a previous life. He could not possibly be punished at birth for sins he was going to commit later on.

Jesus answered in a perfectly matter-of-fact way that he had not sinned nor had his parents. There was, in this case, another explanation. But his reply shows plainly that he quite understood the implication behind the question and he uttered no word of condemnation of it as false doctrine.

Indeed he would not condemn a teaching which he himself most strongly confirmed on another occasion. I refer to Matthew Chapter XVII, verses 10 to 13 wherein we have the direct words of Jesus himself:

"And his disciples asked him saying, 'Why then say the scribes that Elias must first come?' And Jesus answered and said unto them, 'Elias truly shall first come and restore all things. But I say unto you that Elias is come already and they knew him not, but have done unto him whatsoever they listed. Likewise shall also the Son of Man suffer of them.' Then the disciples understood that he spake unto them of John the Baptist."

This is a downright pronouncement that John was Elias reborn. "Elias" is the Greek form of "Elijah", the Hebrew prophet who lived centuries before. In the last book of the Old Testament, Malachi, Chapter IV, verse 5, the Lord promised to send him "before the coming of the great and dreadful day." The people were expecting him to come in some miraculous way but Jesus declared that he had already come by being reborn as John.

Reincarnation - rebirth - was taken for granted by the people who surrounded Jesus, by those who believed and by those who did not; and this is demonstrated by Matthew XVI: 13-14, which read as follows:

"When Jesus came into the coasts of Caesarea Phillipi, he asked his disciples saying, 'Who do men say that I the Son of man am?' And they said, 'Some say that thou art John the Baptist, some Elias, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets'."

John the Baptist was dead, and whether Elias had died or been translated physically to heaven, the rest of the prophets had long since passed away. The Bible nowhere states that any prophet other than Elias was to be sent to the people. Yet they believed that Jesus was either John or Jeremiah or one of the prophets. If Jeremiah, John, and the other prophets were dead, what could the people's conception of Jesus have been but as one of these reborn?

We find the same evidence of this age-old belief in Jeremiah himself. In his book, Jeremiah 1: 4-5 is the following sig-

nificant passage:

"Then the word of the Lord came unto me saying: 'Before I formed thee, I knew thee and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations'."

Unless Jeremiah was already a great soul before his birth, how could he be worthy of this high mission of the Lord? And how could the Lord know him before he had even come into physical existence unless he was living in some other condition? And as "there is no respect of persons with God", how could he have qualified himself so that God would recognize his worth before he took form, except by duty well done in other lives?

Even in the Apocrypha -- books not included in the Bible as inspired, but recognized as being the productions of wise and saintly men, and worthy of study -- we find the same truth. A verse in one of these books, THE WISDOM OF SOLOMON, thus expresses it:

"For I was a clever child: yea, because I was good I was born into a healthy body."

When was that clever child good, so that he earned the right to be born into a healthy body? When else than in a previous life?

Finally let us take a famous passage in REVELATION, III: 12. "Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God and he shall go no more out." Out where, if not into new incarnations? He that overcomes needs no further earth life. He has become figuratively a pillar in God's temple. Earth lives for him are over. But many earthly lives are necessary before that great goal is reached.

Is reincarnation taught in the Bible? Truly it is, for him who has "ears to hear". These passages are absolutely unexplainable in any other way than by the presupposition that they allude to this central fact of soul evolution. If they do not mean reincarnation, what do they mean, what can they mean?

This belief was common to the people of the time. Nowhere in the Bible is it condemned. Nowhere is anyone warned against it as a false or dangerous belief. But the great teachers quoted in the Bible show, directly or indirectly, their entire understanding and approval of the belief.

LIFE AFTER DEATH

The life after death is not the closed book so many people think it is. There exists a vast body of knowledge handed down from earliest times and confirmed and added to by modern super-physical research regarding that land which all of us will one day visit, but in which Theosophy declares none of us will permanently stay.

Later I shall have something to tell you about the methods employed in such super-physical research and you may then decide whether it seems fanciful or realistic. At present I want to talk about what this type of research which, surprising as it may seem, has been going on for thousands of years, has disclosed.

As in my previous talks, let me say that these facts are put before you merely for you to think about should you care to. If they sound fantastic or imaginative, or if you feel that they conflict with your religious beliefs, we have no desire to impose them on you. But many people have found them logical and probable, just the way things might be expected to happen if there really is a life after the physical life has ended.

Theosophy teaches that there is such an after-death existence, in fact two of them. The first is comparatively short, perhaps thirty or forty years, and can be quite happy if one has lived a reasonably good life. The second is immensely longer, running into centuries, and sometimes for a thousand years or more for a very spiritual person. This corresponds to heaven as taught in religion and, while it covers a very long time which may have seemed almost like eternity to our forefathers whose ideas of time were on a minute scale compared to ours, it is not eternal.

The first part of the post-mortem existence is for the purpose of getting rid of the shortcomings which even the best of us usually contrive to acquire during our years of life on earth. If we are honest with ourselves, how few of us can claim that there is nothing in our character or disposition that we would object to preserving for several hundred years! We do not want to take to heaven with us such negative qualities as hatred, pettiness, greed, covetousness, and desires for the wrong things. There would be no place in a spirit-

ual atmosphere for such deficiencies.

So the early after-death years are spent in a condition that can be, and usually is, perfectly comfortable and pleasant but which cannot compare for radiant happiness with the lengthy period that follows and that lasts right up to the time when the Soul again feels the urge for more experience in a body of flesh -- and is reborn. The location in which these early years are passed is called by Theosophists and others informed along these lines the "Astral Plane" or the "Astral World". It is not a vague or shadowy place, but is as full of life - fuller perhaps - as the world in which we now live.

It has its own natural laws differing widely from those of the physical plane we are accustomed to. Strange as it may seem, it is not far away in space but all around us, though unless we are one of the rare people possessing second sight or clairvoyance it does not register at all upon our senses while we are alive.

This should not seem too incredible. It is quite in line with recognized scientific facts. For instance, the words that you hear when the wave-length of your radio is properly attuned to the wave-length on which they are being broadcast are non-existent to others who have not tuned in. Yet the electric impulses which will reproduce them anywhere in the world have gone out everywhere. They need only the receiver, properly tuned and of sufficient power. There is no place on earth where they are not, though they may be said to exist only for the few who are listening in.

Similarly, the astral plane, or immediate after-death world, is all about us, but our physical "wave-length" is incapable of picking up any of its impacts. And yet we ourselves, deep down in the unconscious part of ourselves, carry a body the exact duplicate of the one we know so well, which is made entirely of astral matter - the same kind of matter that the after-death world is composed of. When we leave our flesh-and-blood body at death we immediately take up residence in this astral body, which is equipped with senses which do respond to the new world in which we find ourselves. We are not annihilated at death. Neither are we immediately to be changed into angelic beings. We stay in that world working or playing, travelling, absorbing its culture, and doing

everything on a much grander scale than is possible here, until we have literally worn out from lack of use the old bad habits and qualities. Then, and not till then, are we fit for the wonderful spiritual life of the heaven world.

But the astral life itself, while not comparable in grandeur and glory to the long heaven life that comes afterward, can be made an enlargement of all that was best in the previous life on earth. Everything which does not require a physical body for its expression is available in the astral world. The astral body which we use there has its senses that are the counterparts of those employed on earth though they are not quite the same. They do not require eyes for seeing, ears for hearing, nerves for feeling, and so on. The entire surface of the astral body is responsive to all sensations possible on the plane.

All of the fine arts can be studied - music, painting, sculpture, architecture, poetry. They can be enjoyed to the full and with greater appreciation and understanding than is possible in physical life. The great masterpieces of the world are all duplicated in astral matter as, in fact, is every other material object. They can be observed, so to say, from the inside and joined to the high thought of the artists who produced them. The literature of all ages is open to the astral dweller, and in its original and authentic form, unmutilated and unchanged by later copyists or translators.

And the newly dead, so-called -- they are really more alive than we are -- are not left to blunder and stumble into the new life but are attended and tutored by those who have passed on before. There are kindly and spiritual people who volunteer for this as their helpful work on the astral plane.

It is only if our interests during earth life have been wholly physical, without thought or care for the finer things of life, that we are likely to experience discomfort in this next world. Even then our feeling, if we were ordinarily decent citizens, will be no more than boredom and a sense of dissatisfaction because we can no longer indulge in those things that so engrossed us while here.

It is true that the excessively intemperate, those given over

completely to dissipation, drunkenness and debauchery will be in for a difficult time until their wild desires have worn themselves out. Obviously, without a body of flesh, blood and nerves, physical indulgences are impossible. The privations experienced may be compared, on a much greater scale, to the suffering experienced by a drug addict deprived of his narcotic, or an alcoholic unable to satisfy his craving for liquor. This is not an exact analogy as physical pain does not enter in. The affliction is entirely emotional in a way incomprehensible to one still in the physical body. But in a matter of weeks or months or, in extreme cases, perhaps years it expends itself and the self-made sufferer finds himself at ease, and probably with a lesson learned which will not need to be repeated unless he is deeply steeped in evil-doing. Normally, upon his return to incarnation centuries later he will no longer be addicted, at least in the same degree, to that particular form of grossness.

I have cited such cases merely to complete the record. For most people, even those who without excesses enjoy the customary indulgences of physical life, no such unpleasantnesses are in store. They can enter at once into the many delights of astral life unhampered by the necessary corrective privations of the vicious person. And even for him there will come a return to right living, and a restoration of harmony with the Infinite. For Theosophy teaches that no soul, no spark of God, can ever be lost.

I wish I had time to tell you more about these manifestations of God's care for us on the other side as He cares for us here. There is a vast literature about them, many books by great scholars, both eastern and western. You can find them in the public library under the classification "Theosophy". I particularly recommend the books by C.W. Leadbeater, a Christian Bishop with an extraordinary gift of super-physical sight which he employed for over fifty years to check the information in the ancient books about these matters.

In my next talk I will tell you more about these investigations into the higher conditions in which life is lived when it departs from the physical world. I will also give you some amazing facts which these investigations have disclosed about the heaven-world, facts which answer questions which for most people remain unanswered throughout life.

SUPER-PHYSICAL VISION

My talk today has largely to do with a very much misunderstood subject, super-physical vision, usually called clairvoyance. If, to begin with, any of my hearers misunderstand it, I can quite understand the misunderstanding. All Theosophists can, because most of them probably misunderstood it when they first heard of it. I know I did. And for that reason I will try especially hard to present it to you so that it appears as rational and reasonable and factual as it really is.

You may have thought of the word "clairvoyance", if you ever thought of it at all, as some sort of fakery associated with fortune telling. Occasionally, too, you may have read of remarkable feats having to do with recounting something in the past or something happening at a distance that could not possibly be known to the person who related it. Even some future event, not known to anybody, may, in the experience of a few of my hearers, have been accurately forecast by someone with so-called second-sight.

The reaction of most people to such occurrences is, I suppose, to term them coincidences, lucky guesses, or just plain hoaxes. Up to a point that is a healthy reaction. We do not want outlandish things intruding themselves into our lives. We like to feel that our world is a pretty solid place with substantial natural laws that we can grasp and make use of. It may give us an eerie feeling when some apparently weird and unnatural thing like clairvoyance comes to our attention, and we may decide we want no part of it.

A Theosophist would say that that is a very wise decision for most of us to make. At our present stage of development in evolution, five senses are all we are supposed to have unfolded. But a great many things in nature come in sevens. There are seven notes in the musical scale, seven colors in the spectrum, seven days in the week, and so on. It may not be a surprise, therefore, to learn that man has seven senses, only five of them as yet developed in most people. The other two are latent and are to be developed and used ages hence, these having to do with the faculty of recognizing that which is now unseen, which faculty is called clairvoyance. This is a French word, and all that it means is "clear seeing".

Thousands of years ago, long before recorded history, Theosophy declared that this sense and its sister sense "clairaudience", clear hearing, were present in man in rudimentary form but were not under the control of his will. As the outer senses of seeing, hearing, touching, smelling, and tasting became keener, the two inner senses - for that is what they are - became duller and finally, for all practical purposes, disappeared. But like other vestiges of former stages of our development, a person may very rarely be born with some strange faculty of perception which most others do not possess. You may have heard of the experiments made by Dr. Rhine of Duke University, Durham, N.C., which seem to have proved conclusively that what scientists call "extrasensory perception" is found in quite a number of people in slight degree, and in a few people to an extent which no theory of coincidence will adequately explain.

This, however, is elementary as compared to what students of Theosophy mean by trained clairvoyance, which takes years to acquire, calls for rigid rules of diet, abstention from intoxicants and narcotics, and absolute purity of life and thought. These rules have been handed down in Eastern lands from ancient times, and a very few Theosophists have taken this training under Eastern teachers, with remarkable results.

The knowledge regarding after-death conditions about which I spoke to you last week comes to us not only from very old writings recording the investigations of trained clairvoyants who lived thousands of years ago. It comes also from confirmation of these researches made by Theosophists who developed the same super-physical faculties by taking the necessary training in the East, during the past 75 years. One of these was H.P. Blavatsky, a founder of The Theosophical Society; another, Annie Besant whose name was known all over the world a generation ago, not only for her leadership of The Theosophical Society but for her humanitarian and political work; and a third was C. W. Leadbeater, whom I mentioned last week. Only one or two others are now alive, one living in New Zealand and one in London.

Now I present to you, as I promised in the last talk, one of the most breath-taking and profoundly comforting facts disclosed by this super-physical research. It is about the world of heaven in which we spend so many centuries prior to

rebirth.

We always have those we love with us in heaven even though they may still be living on earth or be in the early after-death land which is not yet heaven.

At first sight this seems impossible, but by a marvelous and beneficent provision of the Divine it becomes a fact in the spiritual lives of all of us. The explanation is simply that the soul, or "ego" as theosophists call it, never takes full possession of any earth body. He is too lofty an entity to be confined within the scope of a physical form, and only a ray, or fragment, of his life ensouls even the greatest of men. Much more remains above in his own high world, although we are unconscious of it except in deep devotion or in mere fleeting experience of spiritual inspiration. While the ego never ensouls more than one physical body at a time, it is quite possible for him to be represented by any number of images of his incarnated self which are automatically and unconsciously made in the heaven world by those who loved him on earth. He instantly ensouls each one. And each of the spiritual duplicates is as truly the beloved individual himself as is the flesh and blood embodiment walking the earth.

And since in that high world nothing in the least discordant can enter, the ones who are with him are always at their best, are always just as he would have them, just as he wanted them to be when he associated with them on earth. No enemy, no one disliked, no one who was even unwelcome in the past life can crash the closed circle of one's own heaven world. But even an animal, a pet dog or cat or bird, will, if greatly loved on earth, be present in that exalted after-life.

A mother whose son has caused her grief by straying from the upright path and from whom, to her great sorrow, she was separated in physical life, will have him with her as the good man and devoted son it was her ambition that he should be. And so does this great dispensation of God's lovingkindness manifest itself in thousands and millions of individual cases each exclusive to itself and not quite like any other.

And in some way, difficult for us down here to understand, the soul itself gains in its spiritual evolution from this multiple ensoulment of thought-images made by those who loved him in his personality on earth. Thus the more people who,

because of this love, want us in their heaven life, the greater is our spiritual progress.

That is the answer, the divine answer, to the question asked millions of times by millions of people: How can one be happy in heaven without those one loves? You have them with you. And always at their best. For without them heaven would not be heaven.

This truth, as C. W. Leadbeater once wrote, is infinitely superior to all the legends invented by man about heaven; but, as he rightly declares, that is to be expected, for the inventions are man's idea of what is best, but the truth is God's idea.

THE PLANES

The theosophical teaching that there exist in nature several different planes or levels or, if you prefer, states of matter in addition to our own wellknown physical matter is not only logical but, when understood, is seen to be a necessary truth.

I say "when understood" because it does not do to jump to conclusions upon hearing any of these esoteric facts for the first time. I tried to point this out in my previous talks on other phases of Theosophy, repeated rebirths, the law of inevitable consequence, the after-death life, and super-physical cognition. None of these is at all like the popular conception of them. All of them have a thoroughly scientific basis and are in conflict with no known scientific facts. And a clear knowledge of them can certainly make life easier to live, misfortune easier to face, and death easier to die.

All of this assuredly applies to the information I aim to pass on to you today regarding the planes of nature. You know that the type of matter with which we are familiar, the physical, exists in three states, solid, liquid, and gaseous. The ancient esoteric science, deriving from super-physical cognition, declares that there are four other states, which are called etheric, super-etheric, sub-atomic, and atomic. These four are not visible to ordinary sight. And yet there are creatures and objects made of this etheric material, as it is called, which are visible even to poorly developed super-physical vision.

As the substance becomes finer its rate of vibration increases, a fact recognized in physics. Physics, however, does not attempt to assign functions or types of manifestation to any but a comparative few of the vibratory ranges. Theoretically - and Theosophy says actually - these ranges can take in vibrations of billions and trillions and quadrillions per second. Matter thus becomes rarer and rarer until, after it reaches the atomic condition, it ceases to be physical at all and is something else. It is no longer responsive in any way to physical laws but is governed by the natural laws peculiar to its own type or plane.

The now wellknown electrons, protons, and neutrons of science

are a composite of the ultimate physical atom plus something from this higher state as well. Electricity, although it cannot manifest physically except in a physical field, is inherently a product of this non-physical plane.

When one is able with super-normal perception to push, so to speak, up out of our own material world and into this other world of unfamiliar substance, a very interesting and wonderful fact appears. This new world, or plane, is composed of the stuff which in us registers as emotion, feeling, or desire. It may seem that such a world must be so filmy and ethereal that it can hardly be real. But to those who live in it, as we ourselves shall for awhile after dying here, it is even more real and vivid than our own. And it is densely populated, not only by our own misnamed "dead", but by beings both lofty and lowly who have never lived on earth, but are natives of this emotional world itself. It is called by Theosophists the Astral Plane.

You may have heard the word "astral" and wondered what it meant. It is derived from the Latin word "aster", a star, and simply means starry. The reason for its use is that this astral realm has a curious but beautiful shining appearance, self-luminous and not depending upon sunlight. It is radiant matter.

Every time you experience an emotion, no matter of what kind, you are using astral matter and creating an effect on the astral plane, although you are completely unconscious of it. And this astral substance has a sort of elementary life of its own which, if your desire is powerful enough and sufficiently long-sustained, tends to make it "come true". This is the secret of the so-called "demonstrations" which sometimes bring to pass things which almost seemed impossible. I shall have more to say about the technique by which this is accomplished in a later talk on Thought Power.

There is another interesting fact that pertains to this subtle realm of the astral that I may mention in passing, although it cannot mean much to most people still living their physical lives on earth. Astral matter is four dimensional. It has an extension which is not length nor breadth nor thickness - our familiar three dimensions. Nor is this 4th dimension time as some physicists use the word. The fourth dimension of the astral world is spatial. It is something

whose description baffles those who have experienced it. There is no language in which they can explain it.

In some way, however, which is completely mysterious to us but apparently not to one with super-physical sight, one of its characteristics is permeability. This characteristic enables the matter of that higher plane to pass through other matter. We are informed that the astral world is responsive to laws of its own as rigid as those which govern the natural order on our wellknown earth; and that there is, in fact, an "Astral Physics" with books written on the subject. I mention these things only to emphasize that the higher worlds are not misty, imaginative places but are, to those who live there as one day all of us will live there, as substantial, real, and stable as our own earth - perhaps more so, since they are nearer to ultimate reality.

Every night in sleep our consciousness migrates, as it were, to the astral plane, leaving the physical body quiescent on the bed. This does not mean that our dreams are necessarily astral experiences. Very few can so register what happens in this higher world that such occurrences impress themselves on the brain. For the most part our dreams are mere automatic activity of the physical brain which seems to throw together bits of recollection in kaleidoscopic fashion. Such dreams may be of value to the psychoanalyst in diagnosing mental difficulties, but they have nothing to do with astral eventuations.

Very occasionally, however, some extraordinarily vivid dream, so graphic that when one awakens it is hard to believe that it was not an actual occurrence, may really be the memory of what happened on the astral plane. Premonitory dreams, of which thousands have been recorded, also trace to the wider and more far reaching knowledge possible there of events shortly to happen here.

I can do no more than give you the barest facts about this fascinating astral world because I want to tell you a little concerning a still higher plane, which trained clairvoyance has also given the faculty for exploring. But first let me explain that the astral plane has its various subdivisions, seven of them to be exact, corresponding to our own solid, liquid, gaseous and etheric subdivisions. When the extreme borderline is reached, the astral atom, there is again a

radical change, and a new world opens up.

This is called the Mental Plane and its material is thought stuff, literally the substance of which thought is made. Thought and feeling are by no means the same thing, though the one almost always accompanies the other. The astral and the mental substances interlink, and express themselves through the brain and nervous system which are their instruments here.

There are many other things I would like to tell you about these worlds. They are not remote, but are all around and within our own world though we do not have senses that respond to them except as they manifest in thought and emotion. I shall have to refer you, however, to the numerous books on Theosophy in the public library which will round out for you the outline I have given.

But one final word I do want to say. That is that we ourselves have complete bodies composed of astral and mental matter interpenetrating our physical body. It is of them that I intend to speak at this same time next week. I shall also have something to say about worlds, or planes, even higher than the mental. There are four of these still higher planes, though the most fully developed clairvoyant has given us information - and that very scanty - about only two of them.

All of this old-new knowledge can be practically applied in daily life with the utmost benefit; and in a later talk on Thought Power, I shall tell you how.

